

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY

**Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement**

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For Immediate Release

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## **Local ICE Officers Arrest “Most Wanted” Criminal Alien**

**CHICAGO, Ill.** — One of the criminal aliens featured on the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement’s (ICE) newly established “Most Wanted” list was arrested last week.



David Cesar Arce Asencio

David Cesar Arce-Asencio, a 42-year old Peruvian national with prior convictions for sexual assault of a minor and firearms violations, was taken into custody without incident May 5 at his residence at 4225 S. Sacramento. Arce-Asencio was ordered to leave the United States and failed to surrender in 2001.

ICE’s Most Wanted Criminal Aliens list is part of an aggressive push by the new bureau to apprehend and remove dangerous criminal aliens from the United States. The list, unveiled today at a news conference in Washington, D.C., features criminal aliens from around the world who pose a continuing threat to public safety.

Those on the ICE Most Wanted Criminal Aliens list are foreign nationals, like Arce-Asencio, who have been convicted for committing serious crimes in this country. Each has been ordered deported from the United States, but remains at large. ICE brings new tools to the hunt for these criminal aliens by combining the full investigative and intelligence resources of the former Immigration and Naturalization Service and the former Customs Service.

“To those criminal aliens who have eluded apprehension in the past, be forewarned: ICE agents will seek you out, apprehend you, and remove you from the United States,” said ICE Acting Assistant Secretary Michael J. Garcia. “As a new agency under the Department of Homeland Security, ICE is committed to ensuring the safety of the American public. Reducing the number of dangerous criminal aliens hiding in this country is a crucial part of that mission.”

ICE’s new Most Wanted Criminal Aliens list is posted on the ICE website at <http://www.bice.immigration.gov>, enabling the public to view the criminal aliens and call in tips on their whereabouts. The website is updated regularly as apprehensions are made. Anyone with information about those on the list should call 1-800-BE ALERT. (1-800-232-5378). The lines are staffed 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

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ICE agents have already arrested half a dozen criminal aliens originally scheduled to be placed on the Most Wanted Criminal Aliens list. On May 1, for example, ICE agents in Salt Lake City apprehended Baldermar Torres-Juarez , who was convicted in 1993 of aggravated assault. Torres-Juarez has been returned to his home country. Those individuals recently arrested have been replaced on the list with new candidates.

“The arrest of David Arce-Asencio is proof that we are using all the tools and resources at our disposal to ensure the safety of our communities,” said ICE Interim District Director in Chicago Cynthia O’Connell. “I am proud that our agents acted swiftly to locate one of ICE’s Most Wanted Criminals, and we will continue locating and removing dangerous criminal aliens from our streets.”

The creation of a Most Wanted Criminal Aliens list is part of an aggressive new strategy at ICE known as the National Fugitive Operations Initiative. The aim of the effort is to reduce the number of alien “absconders” in the United States. Absconders are foreign nationals who have been ordered removed by an immigration judge, but have failed to comply with that order.

ICE received an additional \$10 million from Congress to support the Fugitive Operations Initiative. That funding will be used, in part, to double the number of fugitive operations teams currently in place -- from eight to 16. The areas slated to receive new fugitive operations teams include Virginia, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, Georgia, Illinois, Texas, and Washington.

Another important facet of the Fugitive Operations Initiative is enhancing the agency’s ability to share information with other law enforcement agencies. As part of the effort, plans are moving forward to expand the capabilities of ICE’s Law Enforcement Support Center (LESC) located in Williston, Vermont.

The LESL serves as a vital source of immigration status information for state and local law enforcement agencies on aliens suspected, arrested, or convicted of criminal activity, handling nearly 50,000 inquiries a month. The LESL operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. As part of this initiative, the LESL will also serve as a vital source of information and leads for ICE officers working these cases in the field.

Beyond that, ICE plans to reach out to other federal agencies, including the U.S. Marshals, Internal Revenue Service, and Social Security Administration, to ensure that every available tool is used to locate these absconders.

In fiscal year 2002, the former Immigration and Naturalization Service removed more than 70,000 criminal aliens from the United States. In the first six months of this fiscal year, more than 36,000 criminal aliens have been returned to their home countries. ICE officials are confident the Fugitive Operations Initiative will enable the agency to boost those figures.